

- Rare Appointment For Freshman Lawmaker –Only Three Freshmen Chair Subcommittees -

- Hall Outlines Goals: Cut Down VA Claims Backlog, Lessen Funeral Costs for Veterans Families -

Washington, DC – U. S. Rep. John Hall was appointed Chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs this afternoon. The subcommittee operates as part of the House Committee for Veterans' Affairs, which Hall had been named to earlier this month by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

Receiving the Committee Chair position of a subcommittee is a rare occurrence for freshman members of Congress. Only three freshmen will chair sub-committees, Rep. Hall, rep. Heath Shuler (D-NC,) and Rep. Harry Mitchell (D-AZ.)

"This subcommittee chairmanship is a high honor that gives me the opportunity to go to work and directly impact the lives of over 155,000 Hudson Valley veterans. I am mindful that very few freshman are given the opportunity to lead a sub-committee, and I will devote myself to living up to this honor. No matter your view on a particular conflict, we all agree that those who serve their country deserve the best possible care upon their return home."

As chair of the subcommittee Hall will oversee programs involving veterans' compensation, pensions, life insurance, burial benefits and claims. An especially important mandate of the subcommittee, though, is exploring solutions to the backlog of over 400,000 veterans' claims pending with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Hall outlined four specific goals that his sub-committee would study and hope to achieve.

1. Cut down backlog on Veterans Administration claims.
2. Lessen funeral costs for veterans families
3. Improve outreach programs for veterans to better understand available programs
4. Lengthen time for submitting claims for injuries sustained in service beyond two years

Hall is also slated to serve on the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, which oversees veterans' education, rehabilitation, housing, and other matters. The subcommittee is scheduled to consider a 21st Century GI Bill of Rights this year. "After wearing our country's uniform," Hall said, "no veteran should be faced with homelessness or bankruptcy, as too many are today."

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is in charge of examining all legislation pertinent to veterans and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Veterans' issues regarding health care, disability compensation, GI bill education and job training, home loan guarantees, life insurance policies and a nationwide system of veteran' cemeteries are all under the committee's purview.

Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA,) Chair of the House Veterans Affairs Committee said, "Many of us in Congress had heard of John Hall before he was elected and he has impressed us all with his

commitment to the lives of veterans. We know he will be a leading advocate for veterans in the Hudson Valley and across America."

The 19th Congressional District is home to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the Montrose and Castle Point VA health care facilities, and the Marine and Air National Guard sites at Stewart International Airport. Almost 50,000 veterans live in the 19th

Hall has also been appointed to the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure.